

SB 291 California Community College Financial Aid Proposal Memo

February 8, 2019



I wanted to provide you with updates on the Board of Governors' proposal to expand financial aid to serve students in the California Community Colleges. Senator Connie Leyva, chair of the Senate Education Committee and a member of the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Education, has agreed to author the bill creating the new California Community College Student Financial Aid program—which, when enacted, will become a key component of providing a comprehensive California College Promise. Senator Leyva is a strong, strategic, and effective champion for community college students, and—with her at the helm—we are confident this proposal will be a key part of this year's budget and policy discussions.

Her bill expands financial aid consistent with the principles the Board of Governors put forward:

- All California Community College students with financial need should be eligible to receive financial aid—regardless of their age, time out of high school, or high school grades.
- A student's financial aid should be linked to the *total* cost of attendance—not just tuition and fees, but also housing, food, transportation, and supplies.
- A student should have access to financial aid regardless of the student's educational goals—that is, regardless of whether the student seeks to complete a degree, certificate, or short-term career-technical education program, financial aid should be available equitably.

The legislation is expected to be introduced Thursday, February 14. For your reference, I have attached a copy of the bill text and a background document. We thank the Community College League of California for joining the Board of Governors as sponsors of the bill. Thank you also to those of you who have already signed on as supporters of the proposal—I have included at the bottom of this email the list of those CEOs. We are working with the author's office to identify and recognize supporters as the bill moves through the legislative process. If you would like to add yourself to the list, please let us know. Also, we would appreciate quotes to include as part of our press releases and other materials—even if you have already indicated your support. To share your support and quotes, please email Laura Metune, vice chancellor of external relations, at lmetulan@cccco.edu.

I hope you will also consider having representation in Sacramento for key milestones in the legislative process. There are two especially important events in the near term:

- On Tuesday, February 26, at 9:30 am, the Assembly Higher Education Committee, chaired by Assemblymember Jose Medina, and Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance, chaired by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty, will hold a joint hearing on financial aid reform. The committees will likely take public comment toward the end of the hearing, and they usually provide speakers with around one minute each for comments. It would be a powerful message for your college to share its support specifically for financial aid for community college students consistent with Senator Leyva's bill.
- On Tuesday, March 19, our office is organizing advocacy at the Capitol following the conclusion of the Board of Governors' meeting. We hope this is an opportunity for your college to communicate with your legislators how important it is that the Legislature take action as part of the 2019-20 budget. Recognizing that the costs of travel to Sacramento can be prohibitive, especially for students, we hope you will consider making resources available to allow students to share their stories. If your college would like to participate, please email Laura.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to work together to address inequity in the state's current policies, make a meaningful commitment to community college affordability, and create new opportunities for the most vulnerable Californians. Please reach out if you have suggestions about how to move this proposal forward most effectively!

Eloy Oakley, Chancellor
California Community Colleges